

I urge my colleagues to join me in commending the praiseworthy efforts of my fellow Californians at the Industrial Emergency Council who help protect us from the dangers we face every day.

RECOGNIZING SHERIFF RONNIE
TOUNGETTE'S 26-YEAR SERVICE
TO HUMPHREYS COUNTY

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a local hero who has dedicated his life to making sure our community stays safe. After 26 years as Humphreys County Sheriff, Ronnie Toungette is retiring.

Toungette was born in Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee, grew up in West Nashville and later moved to Waverly, where he eventually became a sheriff's deputy. In 1980, he was appointed county sheriff, and the people of Humphreys County re-elected him to that position again and again.

Sheriff Toungette has been instrumental in cleaning up the numerous methamphetamine labs that have sprouted up as Humphreys County and other communities across the country have fought to control the spread of the dangerous drug. Humphreys County has been a leader in combating meth, and Ronnie's efforts on that front should not go unnoticed.

Toungette and his wife, Darlene, have five grown children, Ronnie, Jr., Stephanie, Shelly, Marcella and Amanda; and eight grandchildren, Matthew, Zachary, Scott, Trey, Tyler, Kirston, Kayla and Kylie.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sheriff Ronnie Toungette on his retirement and thank him for his 26 years of service as the sheriff of Humphreys County. His tireless work has helped make our community a safe and secure place to live.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF
RHETT PAYNE, JR.

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, recently, south Alabama lost a dear friend, a man who was the epitome of a true southern gentleman, and I rise today to pay tribute to his memory.

Rhett Payne was a kind and gentle man. He was generous to a fault and good to the core. Moreover, he came from the era that Tom Brokaw has called "the Greatest Generation." Mr. Rhett answered his country's call to service when World War II broke out—as so many other young boys did at that time—and he returned home a few years later to help make his beloved Jackson a better place to live.

He was a success in business, retiring as district manager for Liberty National Life Insurance Company after three decades of service.

Moreover, he was a winner in life, circling himself with numerous friends and confidantes who all enjoyed his sound judgment, wise counsel and his good humor.

Perhaps the ultimate feather in Mr. Rhett's distinguished cap was his beloved wife of 59 years, Jean, and their two sons, Rhett III and Bill, and the wonderful families they have helped to foster.

Mr. Speaker, there have been many tributes made to the life of Rhett Payne since his untimely passing but none, I think, captures his very essence as a good and decent man better than the article written by my friend, Jim Cox, publisher of the South Alabamian. With your permission, I would like to enter Jim's tribute to Rhett Payne at this time:

The fairways are lush and unbroken. The greens are like the felt atop a quality pool table. It is a perfect golf course . . . but perfect means there are even some challenging holes.

Bounding over the crest of the hill is a youthful Rhett Payne Jr. trailed by his good friend, an equally young and vigorous Bob Harper. They are having a great time. They should be. They are playing the "Cloud 9 X 2" course at No. 9 Heavenly Lane.

I smiled through my tears as I fancied the scene while the Rev. Rhett Payne III was speaking at his father's funeral Saturday at the First Presbyterian Church in Jackson where the senior Payne was a longtime member.

The image was prompted by the Rev. Payne's—"Little Rhett"—reference to his dad being buried with his favorite putter in his hands. He commented that the late Bob Harper, a good friend and longtime president of Merchants Bank, had nicknamed him "Puttin' Payne."

The senior Payne was a charter member of the Jackson Golf Course. He loved the game and a tournament was named in his honor in 1994.

For over 25 years, Rhett and Jean Payne have been a part of my life. Jean has worked with me and for me in the newspaper business. She's earned the nickname "Aunt Jean," from a host of younger people she's come in contact with and influenced over the years, me included.

If she was an aunt, then Rhett was certainly a grand uncle, although the handle was rarely added.

Rhett Payne was a southern gentleman—courtly, well-mannered, and soft-spoken. He didn't gossip much and he rarely criticized or downgraded people.

His son and others commented on his constant and contagious smile and that, along with his sparkling eyes and easy laugh, is what I will remember about Rhett Payne Jr.

Rhett loved to laugh and have a good time. His laughs were not loud guffaws but soft chuckles. They were real and authentic, not put ons.

Rhett was of the "Greatest Generation," a group of World War II veterans who served their country and the world honorably in a time of great crisis and then came home to work and help mold and develop communities. They are fast leaving us and their replacements are not of the same caliber.

By the time I really got to know Rhett, he was retired as a district manager for Liberty National Life Insurance. He had worked for the company for 3 decades.

By then, Jean and I were working together. I'd see him at the office and at office parties, and I visited him frequently in their home where I was always a welcomed guest.

Rhett was 88 when he died last week but I never thought of him as being old. While he and Jean were old enough to be my parents, I always thought of them more as peers and contemporaries than as "old folks."

Rhett III did a wonderful job Saturday eulogizing his dad. He stepped the congregation through the seasons and through amusing in-

cidents that he and his younger brother, William McCrary "Bill" Payne, remembered of their growing up years with Rhett and Jean.

He detailed his parents' love and said they went out almost every Friday night, still "dating" to keep their love alive.

They were married for 59 years.

Jean and Rhett loved to dance. If you never saw them performing on the dance floor, you really missed something. Think of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and you'll come close.

I was at some event, political or newspaper, I'm not sure, years ago and the Paynes were there, too. There was a band and a few couples were muddling through dances. I was at the back of the room when I noticed the crowd parting around the dance floor. I edged to the side of the group and there was Jean and Rhett. It was then that I really understood the phrase "cutting a rug." They were having a ball. And so was everybody watching them.

Time is not important in Heaven. Rhett may be enjoying his golf game now but he will trade his golf shoes for his dancing shoes one day when he'll swing his beloved Jean out across a celestial dance floor.

Of course, we are in no hurry down here, Rhett. Enjoy your game!

Mr. Speaker, may the entire Payne family draw some comfort during their time of grief with the knowledge that their beloved husband, father and grandfather will be sorely missed.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN CON-
DEMNS BOMB BLASTS IN BOM-
BAY

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan has condemned the train bombings in Bombay this week. Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, whom most of us know, said that "this is a terrible incident and shameful for whoever carried it out. Terrorism is never acceptable."

The attacks have been attributed to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Kashmiri organization. One thing you have to say about Lashkar, though: normally, they take responsibility for what they do. But as Dr. Aulakh pointed out, they have not done so in this instance and the attack fits the pattern of the kinds of attacks carried out by the Indian government and its operatives, which the Council of Khalistan details in the release. These include the Air India bombing, the many attacks on Christian groups, the Gujarat massacre, and the fact that as the Washington Times reported, India is sponsoring cross-border terrorism in Sindh. These are not the acts of a responsible democracy.

This kind of activity is the mark of a terrorist state, Mr. Speaker. If we are serious about fighting terrorism, we should stop our aid and trade with India and we should support a free and fair plebiscite in the minority nations that seek their freedom in South Asia.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN CONDEMNS TRAIN
BOMBINGS

WASHINGTON, DC., July 12, 2006—Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, today condemned the train bombings in Bombay in which 190 people were killed and over 660 were injured.